

as well as 51 percent of total natural gas processing plant capacity. The Gulf States provide the docks, roads, railroads, refineries, and other infrastructure that makes energy production possible to fuel America's economy.

On top of this, our waterways support trade throughout the country. Farm crops produced in the Upper Midwest pass through the lower Mississippi on their way to international markets. We need equitable revenue sharing to continue hosting these industries, ensuring that America continues to have a resilient domestic energy supply and access to the goods and services we need.

If the President is serious about protecting families, our environment, enhancing the resiliency of the gulf coast and improving the Nation's economic infrastructure, he should have worked with Congress to ensure that this never happens again.

I yield to the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and friend from Louisiana.

I want to talk a little bit about the work of the Senate Judiciary Committee because we have had a pretty extraordinary week this week in the committee under the leadership of the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY. We have been focusing our efforts on our criminal justice system and how it has been transformed in recent years because instead of just being law-and-order courts, our criminal justice system is dealing with everything from heroin addiction to opioid addiction, mental health challenges, and the recognition that eventually many of the people who are in our prisons will get out of prison, and we have become more focused on what we can do to help those who are willing to accept some help to be better prepared for a life on the outside and not reengage in this turnstile that sometimes our criminal justice system has become, where they get in jail or in prison, they get out, and then they automatically end up back in prison. That is not good for society, for public safety. It is not good for the taxpayer who has to pay for it, and it really is a squandering of human capital when some people—indeed, a significant number of people—are willing to accept that help to deal with their drug or alcohol issues, to learn a skill, and to turn their lives around.

We had a hearing yesterday that I want to make particular note of on a piece of legislation I have introduced called the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act. The Presiding Officer is well familiar with this and is sponsoring some important comprehensive mental health legislation himself, and we are working together to try to find common ground on that, but my

legislation is designed specifically to address how do we equip law enforcement with the additional tools they need in order to address the mental illness crises they find in their daily work and in our criminal justice system.

We made good progress, but the fact is I think most of us were shocked to realize our jails and prisons have become the de facto treatment centers for people with mental illness, and actually in most instances it is not diagnosed and not treated. People self-medicate with drugs or alcohol, exacerbating their problems, and we couldn't have had two better witnesses. One was the sheriff, Susan Pamerleau, from Bexar County, TX, San Antonio—my hometown—which has created a model program of how to divert people for treatment and to get them out of the criminal justice system and back on their feet but also to save tax dollars and make sure our jails and our criminal justice system is reserved for people who are bad actors and not just people who are suffering from a mental health crisis.

Today we considered and passed a bill called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, known as CARA. This is another example of bipartisan work being done in the Senate, which is back doing the people's work with some notable accomplishments.

More importantly, it addresses a real crisis in the country because we have all come to be aware of the fact that America is facing an epidemic of drug addiction, ranging from prescription drug painkillers to heroin, addiction that is ruining lives of Americans and taking the lives of far too many.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 47,000-plus Americans died from drug overdoses in 2014—47,055 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2014, more than any previous year on record and more than double the mortality record from the year 2000. That statistic cries out for further investigation and action. These 47,000-plus drug overdoses represent 150 percent more deaths than those caused by motor vehicles. I know we spend a lot of resources and a lot of time trying to improve safety for people on our highways driving cars down the road, but more than 150 percent more people died from drug overdoses than motor vehicles, and 61 percent of those deaths involved some type of opioid, including heroin.

Fortunately, this legislation begins to establish a strategy to address this problem head-on. The bill would expand prevention and education efforts to help people learn the dangers of becoming addicted to prescription medication and the dangers of even experimenting with a drug as powerful and addictive as heroin.

It would also reauthorize and expand Federal anti-heroin and anti-methamphetamine task forces, which are on the frontlines in the battle against drug trafficking organizations, many of

whom operate south of the Texas-Mexico border and import their poison into the United States.

This legislation would also promote treatment and recovery options for those struggling with deadly addictions and provide law enforcement and first responders the tools they need to help reverse overdoses as fast as possible by giving medication, which will actually restore people to health rather than see them die because of their overdoses.

This legislation is another example of the fight that I think we all share in common without regard to partisan affiliation. I want to particularly point out the leadership of the Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. AYOTTE, and the Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN, together with Senator WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island, who have been leading the effort to make opioid addiction a national priority.

I hope there are other ways in the future we can consider strengthening the hand of those fighting on the supply side of the drug addiction battle. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act primarily deals with the demand side, people who have become addicted to prescription drugs and heroin, but as I indicated a few moments ago, we have tons of heroin, methamphetamine, and other drugs being imported into the United States by transnational criminal organizations, otherwise known as cartels.

Earlier this week, the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, testified before the Armed Services Committee. He touched on how significant this problem is in Latin America and where many of the drugs sold in the United States are grown or manufactured. Director Clapper noted that the production of heroin in Mexico has been increasing steadily in response to U.S. demand. Other illicit substances, such as cocaine, have been increasing in volume as well, but while the production and importation through illicit networks into the United States has been growing, our efforts to interdict or intercept these drugs and keep them from landing on our shores has not been keeping up.

In 2014 alone, drug cartels successfully smuggled more than 250,000 pounds of heroin across our borders at a street value of about \$25 billion. We need to have a real conversation about the budget shortfalls that allow this to happen and how it is impeding our ability to choke off the flow of these illicit drugs coming into our country.

We have to do more to resource our military, particularly the Southern Command, which has as its area of responsibility Mexico and to the south, where many of these drugs transit. We need to provide those on the frontlines with the tools they need in order to combat and prevail over these transnational criminal organizations.

Let me give you a quick snapshot. U.S. Southern Command, which I mentioned a moment ago, is our geographic

combatant command that has responsibility for this region, but it has been given zero ships needed to conduct countertrafficking missions in the Caribbean. Why is that?

Unfortunately, the Navy fleet is too small, and the Navy doesn't have enough ships to commit to this region in light of the growing array of national security threats around the globe. Even though the U.S. Coast Guard has stepped up and provided a variety of ships, their fleet also has limitations. It is aging and small.

Other nations have noticed our hands-off approach in this region and around the world. Just like the Middle East, our adversaries, like Russia, are happy to fill the power vacuum left by an America that they see in retreat. At least four times last year Russia had more naval ships in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility than we did—four times. That is our backyard. What were those Russian ships doing there? Most likely they were conducting intelligence collection missions. This is simply unacceptable and an invitation to even further confrontation and perhaps even conflict. We have obvious national interests in this part of the world, and they include putting a stop to the trafficking of illegal drugs that end up poisoning and often killing Americans.

If we can't even accurately patrol the Caribbean with our own vessels, we clearly have a problem. Let me be clear. We are not asking or talking about multibillion-dollar aircraft carriers or ballistic missile submarines but rather smaller ships that can help launch and recover helicopters to help interdict the growing shipment of drugs in the region.

SOUTHCOM simply needs to be better resourced if it is going to make a dent in the rampant trafficking of drugs that ruin American lives once they reach our border. General Kelly, the former head of the Southern Command, has testified previously that too often his troops have to simply sit and watch the drugs come into the United States across the Caribbean because they simply don't have the resources to interdict it and to stop it.

While the men and women of SOUTHCOM's Joint Interagency Task Force South are doing yeoman's work in this area, they can't fully succeed in taking down the trafficking networks if we don't give them the resources to do so.

As we continue to work hard for the American people, I hope we will take a serious look at the shortfall in our military budgets for countertrafficking missions. We can't just look at the devastation wrought by heroin and prescription opioid abuse in the Northeast without looking at the supply of the very heroin that is killing Americans and addicting them to a miserable existence, one that threatens not only their life and their families but our communities. We need to focus on the supply side and better equip the men

and women tasked with the difficult job of protecting our country and our people from these transnational threats.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Washington.

TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE ENFORCEMENT BILL

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, to talk about an important national security measure that was passed in today's Customs bill that the conference report included and was voted out of the Senate. The Customs bill included an important provision that was authored by myself and Senator COLLINS in December of last year. Called S. 2430, the Travel Facilitation and Safety Act, it concerned how to improve biometric standards for visa waiver countries. Senator COLLINS and I focused on two things: increasing security standards for those visa waiver countries that we believe should use better biometrics and share that information and data, and improving security at our airports before people reach the United States, so we can know that we have done a thorough background check and evaluation.

Senator COLLINS and I want to stop potential terrorists before they board a plane bound for the United States.

I thank Secretary Jeh Johnson for working with us in December on S. 2430, and also for helping to get this included in the Customs bill.

What we want to do is expand the customs and border security efforts that exist here in the United States and, if you will, expand our border controls to overseas airports. After the Paris attacks reignited a national discussion about what to do to improve U.S. security, we wanted to make sure that we do something specifically for those individuals traveling from 38 visa waiver countries. These are countries for whose citizens we do not require a full background check on individuals prior to coming to the United States. I know the Senator from Maine understands commerce. From the perspective of my home State, I know that we appreciate the free flow of people and commerce. It is something we depend on for our economy, but our economy also depends on the security of a travel system to catch bad actors before they reach the shores of the United States.

Currently, manifests are checked by Homeland Security when passengers board a plane bound for the United States. Airline personnel perform some checks as well, but when no U.S. visa is required for travel to the United States, there is less scrutiny on those travelers before they reach U.S. shores, when they go through customs.

This is something we sought to address. With an ever-changing security landscape around the world and the challenges that we face with ISIS, it is

very important to continue to upgrade our security regime.

Earlier this week, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper warned that ISIS is likely to try to attack the United States this year, so we must continue to do everything we can to make our country safe. Two incidents highlight the need for expanding the border protection outside the United States of America.

One EU citizen, Mehdi Nemouche, was radicalized through multiple stints in prison. After he was released, he was able to cover his tracks and fly from the EU to Syria. He was able to carry out an attack on a Jewish museum when he came back to Brussels, even though he was on an EU watch list, because he was not placed under ongoing surveillance. Nothing in his travel through airports helped him to be deterred.

German officials notified the French of his appearance in Frankfurt after returning from several weeks in Southeast Asia, having since departed Syria. There was no record of his having traveled to Syria as an EU resident, so he was allowed to come back into Germany and travel through Europe's common border zone. It was from there he entered Belgium unchecked to carry out his attacks.

In addition, one of the masterminds behind the Paris attacks traveled back and forth between Belgium and Syria multiple times, even though he was known to French intelligence. His mobile phone was traced to Greece because of a call he made to an extremist group in Belgium. We don't know exactly how he crossed into Greece from Syria, but we do know that there are holes in the system that terrorists can exploit.

Senator COLLINS and I first started working on the issue of biometric standards and improving our security with visa waiver countries several years ago after the Renshaw case, in which an individual from Algeria went to France and from France to Canada, making up a new identity every step of the way. He then made it to the U.S. border in Washington State at Port Angeles and made up a new identity as a Canadian citizen. Thank God a customs and border security agent was smart enough to realize something was amiss, and when they checked the trunk of the car, they found explosives that he had planned to use to blow up LAX.

Today's legislation makes sure our physical border checks are moved to overseas airports so that U.S. law enforcement officials will be there on the ground to check for those people who are slipping through the European regime and may try to board an airplane bound for the United States of America.

It is very important that we continue to strengthen our security regime, and I believe there is more that we can do. Our bill, S. 2430, would have allowed